



Consider how you can take advantage of the newest technologies in your Christian publishing ministry.

By Marlene LeFever

# Harnessing the Big T Word

**M**odel trains are now equipped with a thumb-nail-sized circuit board packing more processing power than the computer that went to the moon on Apollo 11! Welcome to the world our children are growing up in. Technology!

A few years ago, I found myself on the edge of the computer era. I loved the typewriter. I had no desire for anything else. But then came the day when my boss walked into my office carrying a computer. I knew he was excited about it, so I tried to match his enthusiasm. "Great! Thanks! I'll learn how to use it just as soon as I get caught up!" Smiling broadly, he unplugged my typewriter and walked away with it. The first day on that computer I got a terrible headache. The second day things went a lot better. By the third day, if the office had caught on fire, I would have saved my computer first.

I never minimize the trauma of that first day when I talk to people who are faced with new methods and machinery. But was it worth it? For me, absolutely! We can do this! God made our brains about one million times as smart as the current PCs.

The following suggestions may adapt to your situation. My first idea is one I used to write this column. Ask the young experts how they would incorporate new technology into your business.

Print Web site addresses in your books that help readers more deeply explore the subject of their new book.

With your book, sell a DVD that includes things like a message from the

author and a commercial for more books in the series. Or, consider an accompanying CD with a children's book that includes coloring and other interactive sheets that parents can print at home.

Give your customers add-on value by providing them with links to free services. For example, if a customer buys a book in English on adult ministry, point him to <http://www.SAMJournal.com>. When you come out with a new book, set up a members-only chat room where readers can get together to talk about the book. For more information, check out <http://www.tappedin.org>.

Collect the e-mail addresses of Christian leaders who would benefit from your books, and do an e-blast ad. This can be as simple as sending a text e-mail to everyone on your list, or you can get fancy and send an HTML e-mail, allowing you to use graphics, pictures and prettier fonts like those you see on the World Wide Web.

When your company is celebrating a significant anniversary, such as five years of publishing, develop a PowerPoint presentation of your history for churches within your market area. Include them in your celebration of what God is doing through your ministry.

Your curriculum could help Sunday school teachers encourage children to create and share a Web page that demonstrates how they are living the truths they learned this month. This becomes an online portfolio of spiritual growth.

If young teens are studying the Israelites in Egypt, they could go online to an archeological site where the story

took place. Give address sites in the curriculum.

Video programs are becoming more common. Windows XP comes with one, as do all Apple computers. This allows you to take video from a camcorder and edit it, add titles, etc. Students can videotape projects or skits in class, edit them, then burn the completed movies onto CDs or DVDs. These make great keepsakes and ways to let parents see what is happening in children's ministries. For more ideas see the chapter "Teaching Without Walls" in my book *Creative Teaching Methods* (Cook, 3rd revision 2004).

If you think none of these ideas are within your reach, read David Mehli's column on page 24. You may be closer than you think! We need to face this challenge just as Paul encouraged us to face so many challenges in I Corinthians 9:19, "I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible . . . I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." ♦